

## 10.24.06 - Rep. Rahall Announces Establishment Of Mine Safety Technology Consortium

MONTGOMERY, WV - U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today announced the establishment of a statewide Mine Safety Technology Consortium, to be housed at WVU Technical and Community College. The Consortium will be a catalyst to transforming West Virginia coal mining, know-how, skills and capabilities to produce superior coal mine safety and health technology, products and services, including training technologies.

The Consortium is one component of a \$4 million-dollar project, which is the result of the Congressman's deep concern for mine worker safety and vision for the future. The project is being funded by a \$2 million EDA grant, \$1 million in state funding and another \$1 million in private funds, including \$100,000 from Arch Coal and \$200,000 from State Electric.

Project collaborators include the WVU Institute of Technology-Community and Technical College; Marshall University Center for Environmental, Geotechnical & Applied Sciences (CEGAS); Wheeling Jesuit University-National Technology Transfer Center (NTTC); West Virginia High Technology Consortium (WVHTC); Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI); and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The Mine Safety Technology Consortium will be headquartered at the WVU Institute of Technology in Montgomery.

Text of Congressman Rahall's remarks follow (as prepared for delivery):

Remarks of U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall

Announcement of Mine Safety and Technology Consortium

WVU Community and Technical College

Tuesday, October 24, 2006, 11 AM

Thank you, Dr. Harris for the kind introduction. This is an exciting day for the WVU Community and Technical College and for miners throughout the world. It gives me great pleasure to join you today to announce the establishment of the Mine Safety Technology Consortium.

As we all know too well, this year began on a dark and mournful note in the coalfields of our State. For a moment, the darkness was bathed in the lights and flashes of a concerned and attentive world media. As Senator Byrd said at the time, this attention will wane, but our work on behalf of the miner never will.

After months of work, on a warm evening in June, the U.S. House of Representatives, at my urging, overwhelming approved long-overdue legislation to renew the Federal effort to make our mines safer. That was a critical first step to turning around a Federal mine safety program that had gone horribly off track.

Today we mark another significant step in that long process aimed at protecting the lives of each and every miner.

The development of a statewide Mine Safety Technology Consortium (MSTC) and creation of the Mine Safety Technology Incubator will be a catalyst for transforming mining know-how into superior coal mine health and safety products and services, including training technologies.

West Virginia is in a unique position, with its significant coal mining expertise, to take the lead in developing the next-generation of technologies to address mine safety and health issues as they relate to the safety of the miner. This Consortium will get us one step closer to making this potential a reality.

This will be the springboard to launch new technologies to keep pace with progress in OTHER fields.

It is another in a long line of public-private partnerships that are building a better West Virginia.

I commend Byron Davis and the EDA for its \$2 million investment in this critical initiative, Gov. Manchin and the state of West Virginia for its \$1 million investment, and the many private entities that have contributed another million, including Jeff Clark and State Electric Supply, which has contributed \$200,000 to the project, Clifton Frye and Arch Coal, which has committed \$100,000. We couldn't have done this without your support. Let's give them a round of applause.  
(PAUSE)

Last but certainly not least, I would also like to recognize our project collaborators--- the WVU Institute of Technology-Community and Technical College; Marshall University Center for Environmental, Geotechnical & Applied Sciences and Project Manager Tony Szwilksi; Wheeling Jesuit University-National Technology Transfer Center (NTTC); West Virginia High Technology Consortium (WVHTC); Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI); and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The Mine Safety Technology Consortium will be headquartered at the WVU Institute of Technology in Montgomery.

And to all of you here today, thank you for your commitment to mine safety.

When our miners descend underground to provide for their families and our Nation, they deserve every assurance that the safety laws in place are strong and that those laws are being enforced. The MSTC is an important step in our quest to

ensure the health and safety of our miners.

To borrow from the poet, we have many miles to go, we have as many promises to keep before we can sleep. Walking and working together will win the day.

Thank you.